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In the claims:

All of the claims standing for examination are reproduced below. Claims 31 and 34 are amended and claims 32, 35 and 36 are canceled in this response.

1-30 (Canceled)

31. (Currently amended) In a data-packet network, ~~having a label-switching sub-network with one ingress node and one egress node, with at least two nodes internal to the sub-network connected by parallel links,~~ a method for routing packets through ~~the sub-network and the parallel links~~ while ensuring in-order delivery for unique packet flow defined by unique source/destination pairs, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a label-switching sub-network having one ingress node and one egress node and at least two nodes internal to the sub-network for routing packets;

~~(a)~~ (b) creating a sufficient number of label-switched paths (LSPs) from the ingress node to the egress node ~~such~~ that each packet flow ~~may have~~ has a unique LSP; and

~~(b)~~ (c) associating each packet flow with one of the created LSPs;

wherein each sub-network node is connected by one or more physical parallel links and the number of LSPs created is equal to the least-common multiple of the number of links between each individual internal sub-network node in the node path, wherein the number of links between the sub-network nodes may differentiate.

32. (Canceled).

33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 31 wherein, in step (a) a mask value is added to a label value in the process of setting up the LSPs, and the LSPs are all created in response to a single signal sent from the ingress node.

34. (Currently amended) A routing system in a data-packet network ~~having~~ comprising:

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a label-switching sub-network with one ingress node and one egress node, with at least two nodes internal to the sub-network, each node connected by one or more physical parallel links;

a mechanism for creating a sufficient number of label-switched paths (LSPs) from the ingress node to the egress node such that each packet flow ~~may have~~ has a unique LSP; and

a mechanism for associating each packet flow with one of the created LSPs;

characterized in that the number of LSPs created is equal to the least-common multiple of the number of links between each individual internal sub-network node in the node path, wherein the number of physical links between the sub-network nodes may differentiate.

35. (Canceled)

36. (Canceled)